

2000 - THE SHORTWAVE YEAR IN REVIEW BY GLENN HAUSER  
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[complete version; an abridged version was broadcast on  
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## DISASTERS

Fire damaged several shortwave transmitter sites:

Radio Northern in Papua New Guinea;

Most notably, Radio Nederland, Bonaire generators burned up April 23, but incredibly returned to the air in a week with temporary facilities, and will soon be back with greater strength than before.

Another fire put the French Guiana relay at Montsinéry off the air from September for months, forcing France, China, Japan and Switzerland to move broadcasts back and forth to other sites, primarily France, Ascension, and Bonaire.

Various Russian transmitter sites had to go off for not paying their power bills, and Ukraine has to make do with one tenth its previous power.

Medium- and shortwave sites of Italy and Vatican faced closure due to fears of excessive RF radiation.

In Ecuador, HCJB prepared itself for the disaster of a new airport or a volcanic eruption, by purchasing land on the coast for a new transmitter site.

Another disaster was the BBC World Service multi-stream system inaugurated April Fool's Day, so complex that the BBC itself could not follow its own published schedules, causing great confusion and frustration to listeners.

Instead of suing WWCR out of existence, Art Bell agreed to a confidential settlement including an apology, for something nasty one programmer said on the air. [And will return to Coast to Coast AM Feb 5!]

## TRANSITIONS

WGTG in Georgia converted from religious to commercial, renamed WWFV, but we hear the same far right politics as usual.

Radio Canada International introduced new sounders, much later than

they should have, and then after 20 years moved back into the CBC Maison de Radio-Canada à Montréal.

#### RELAY SITES

RCI decided to relay not only China, but Vietnam, so now Canada provides more than we can stand of Marxist-Leninist rhetoric.

Except when by mistake we got relays of Israel instead of Vietnam; and Britain's gay radio LBH instead of Austria.

Croatian Radio Zagreb expanded English from 5 to 20 minutes, but then had to quit the German relays and rely on its own weaker signals.

Lithuania proudly installed its own transmitter and then antennas to serve North America directly, but reception could not match relays via Germany; they should have bought time on an American shortwave station.

KHBN Palau leased most of its time to a church in Hong Kong, where religions must be authorized and controlled by the communist government.

High Adventure Ministries' Voice of Hope had to quit southern Lebanon with the Israelis, and then registered the same frequencies, for possible use from another warzone, Liberia.

The Australian government insulted Radio Australia by leasing the Cox Peninsula transmitters to foreign evangelists called Christian Voice. Swallowing its pride, and with an increased budget, RA hoped to purchase relay time from CV on the transmitters that should have stayed Radio Australia's.

Vatican Radio does not like to talk about relays inward or outward, but we know that after going out via CIS countries, in 2000 Voice of Russia began relays via Vatican, as did Swiss Radio International, which has only one shortwave transmitter still on the air in Switzerland.

The Christian Scientists also refuse to disclose relay sites, but we know they are using the Russian Far East, with Taiwan as a cover.

To be socially responsible, Radio Nederland put Radio Ecclésia, Angola, back on shortwave, but it lasted only briefly in midyear.

#### NEW STATIONS & SERVICES

We discovered a new Guatemalan shortwave station in March, Radio

Verdad, on a far out of band 4-MHz frequency, providing lots of local color from Chiquimula.

Perú continued to be the prime source of new shortwave stations, mostly out of band and unlicensed, a new one reported almost every week. Honorable mention, second place to Bolivia.

United Nations Radio started brief weekdaily shortwave newscasts via Merlin sites to Africa.

Yet another American group started evangelizing on shortwave, World Beacon, from Jacksonville via Merlin to Africa, and maybe Europe.

The United Methodist Church tested in December four hours daily via Germany to Africa, music and programs on health and social issues rather than preaching, and has just started regular service January first.

AFRTS surprisingly replaced satellite with more USB shortwave relays, all from exotic islands: Diego García, Guam, Hawai'i, Sicily, but not yet Iceland.

Scandinavian Weekend Radio started monthly broadcasts from Finland as a legalized pirate, with as little as 50 watts.

Private Russian stations somehow got on shortwave with names like Radio Retro from Saint Petersburg and Radio Mix Master from Yakutsk.

Iran had the chutzpah to call a new anti-Zionist service in English especially for Israel, Radio Shalom. It's bound to be a big hit.

Thanks to all the Philippine guestworkers in the Gulf, Radio Kuwait started a service in Tagalog called Radio Pinoy, also shortwaved back to the islands.

But whatever became of big plans for a celebrity-backed shortwave service to be called Earth One?

## STRIKES

Industrial action, or strikes, disrupted programming, even news, at least briefly at these stations: Radio France International, RAI in Italy, Radio Australia, and even the BBC World Service.

The entire English staff of Radio Slovakia International quit in a management dispute, but they were quickly replaced.

## OFF SHORTWAVE

Radio Yugoslavia's shortwave transmitters in Bosnia were taken away, and RY still has not come back from Serbia itself, or foreign relays.

VOA cut a number of language services, unemploying dozens of erstwhile broadcasters in Polish, Hungarian, Czech, Slovene, Latvian and Lithuanian.

Imagination Radio could not imagine continuing on shortwave instead of satellite.

Radio MINURCA closed down in the Central African Republic, but its replacement, Radio Ndeke Luka has yet to appear.

#### BACK ON SHORTWAVE

In Y 2000 we regained a few shortwave stations, ELWA in Liberia; SLBS Sierra Leone; and GBS Guyana.

#### INTERNET

Among the holdouts from the internet are UAE Radio, Dubai, with no website, and Radio Bulgaria was forced to ask for letters by P-mail, still more reliable than E-mail.

Voice of Turkey began webcasting, if you can find it, a useful backup in difficult reception areas, like western North America.

Radio Moldova International had to quit shortwave, but be advised, they still webcast in five languages via internet only.

That low power 11-meter link in Portland, Oregon, on 25950, KPM556, has its own website and audio streaming.

#### ENGLISH & LANGUAGES

Finland is not obliged to broadcast in English, so took a summer break, then returned with less than before.

As part of its budget cut, Austrian Radio also reduced English; Switzerland cut other languages, filling time with more English. Austria may have to quit shortwave entirely this year; Switzerland next year.

FEBC Manila, Philippines, held on to only half an hour of English per day, after sesquidecades of fuller service, not just evangelism but news and features.

Among the few countries expanding their language services were Iran and Turkey, and Radio Prague resumed Russian.

## CONTESTS

A few shortwave stations still run contests for listeners. Roger Tidy in England wrote an essay winning him a trip to Turkey; I clicked on icons at the Radio Korea cyberstamp exhibition winning me two RKI coffee mugs!

## DX PROGRAMS

Communications World resolidified into a single 24 to 28 minute program, instead of three scattered pieces.

In 2000, some of our fellow DX/media programs came to an end: Pacific DX Report on KTWR, and... Media Network on Radio Netherlands.

But DX Partyline continued, abbreviated, on HCJB, even though Allen Graham had to produce it remotely from the US on the road. [but not this week...]

## OTHER PROGRAM NEWS

HCJB's science and religion program in English El Mundo Futuro, now has only a past.

Also lamented, at least by Larry Nebron, is ``Switzerland's best program,`` Tourism Rendezvous.

Deutsche Welle cancelled its North American mailbag, for lack of interest.

RCI's director admitted that CBC programming has merely been filling time until RCI can produce more of its own, which has already started.

Radio Taibei International doubled the amount of feature programming so each day has two non-duplicated hours - but a new budget cut may soon undo this.

Pagan Potpourri returned to WBCQ, just after World of Radio.

## OBITS

We note with sadness the passing in 2000 of these broadcasters: Charlie Courtts of Radio Budapest, a.k.a. László Pintér; Van Dulken of Radio Nederland; Herbert Kuhnle of ORF Austria; Allan McFee of CBC;

Peter Jones of BBC's Just a Minute; and William Winter, the first  
``Voice`` of America.

And we mourn the loss of some of our listening friends: Gigi Lytle of  
Texas, Brian Cooley of British Columbia.

#### TECHNICAL

Digital Radio Mondiale carried out periodic tests from several  
otherwise analog sites, including HCJB. Analog listeners complained  
that the wide digital signals caused interference, taking up three  
channels at once.

Distortion or undermodulation emanated from: Libya, Egypt, Iraq,  
Tajikistan, and hardly any modulation at all from WMLK in  
Pennsylvania. Yet that station is getting a powerful new transmitter  
from Switzerland, which also sold other unwanted shortwave senders to  
North Korea, where modulation is improving.

Taking the honors in 2000 for putting out the most shortwave spurs  
and mixing products were:  
Doctor Gene Scott in Costa Rica; Radio Rebelde in Cuba; Ghana, Egypt,  
Romania, Sa'udi Arabia, Vietnam, and Sackville, Canada.

#### JAMMING JEERS

Cuba, China and Vietnam, by coincidence some of the few communist  
countries left, lead the world in jamming fellow shortwave  
broadcasters.

Iran did the same last February against VOA and Radio Liberty, trying  
to block unbiased election news.

#### CLANDESTINES & SURROGATES

Clandestine shortwave broadcasting remains a major industry. New and  
notable ones in 2000 include:

Falun Dafa Radio, for China, via Tajikistan and Bulgaria.

Radio Freedom, Voice of the Ogadeni People;  
Voice of the Democratic Path of Ethiopian Unity,  
and Ethiopian Medhin.

Voice of Sudan closed, but Voice of Hope for southern Sudan opened,  
courtesy of Radio Nederland, also transmitting the Voice of the  
People, to Zimbabwe. For a few weeks leading up to the midyear  
election, VOA provided a Zimbabwe Forum.

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty started broadcasting their Arabic and Persian services also to Europe, but [from Radio Free Asia] we are \*still\* waiting on Wu.

More African clandestines include Radio Télé-Liberté for the Congo; National Radio of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic.

Much Mideast clandestine action remains, especially involving Iraq, Iran and Kurdistan.

#### WORLD RECORDS

Capturing honors for lowest powered licensed shortwave station, at least in North America, was CHNX, Halifax, Nova Scotia, with only 40 watts, but still widely heard.

The highest frequency of a real shortwave station was 25930, from RFPI Costa Rica, until it was cut off in May; honorable mention to that Argentine independent sideband feeder on 29810.

Even tho it's solar max, private US stations belatedly ventured, only reluctantly, into higher frequencies -- WBCQ on 17 MHz, WRMI on 15.

Honors for the most useless service go to the Voice of Indonesia, broadcasting in Arabic to the Pacific. ###

More details on these items and source citations can be found in the 2000 columns of Global Forum in Monitoring Times, and in DX Listening Digest, <https://www.angelfire.com/ok/worldofradio/Dxldmid0.html>